

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes
May 16, 2007**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
Ed Anchordoguy	California Wool Growers Association
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Steve Schoenig	Department of Food & Agriculture
Tracy Schohr	California Cattlemen's Association
Justin Oldfield	California Cattlemen's Association

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. Introductions of all present were made.

Item 3, Review of the March and April 2007 Minutes

Minutes from the May and April meetings were reviewed and approved by unanimous vote.

Ken Zimmerman asked that Jeff Stephens obtain a copy of the Wildlife Action Plan from Tracy Schohr with Cattlemen's Association. Jeff Stephens will make the contact. Tracy Schohr advised that the Executive Summary would be of most value to RMAC.

Ken Zimmerman instructed Jeff Stephens to provide a list of tasks within two 2 weeks following each RMAC meeting in order to track tasks between meetings. Mr. Stephens indicated that he would provide the list.

Mike Connor asked that Jeff Stephens follow-up with Jenifer Gilles of Cal Trans to provide Department policy on cleaning equipment prior to leaving job sites. Jeff Stephens will make the contact.

Ken Zimmerman asked Jeff Stephens if there was any new information to report on the VTP EIR. Mr. Stephens indicated that there is no new information in a format that can be circulated for review. Several chapters are still under construction.

Item 4, Discussion of the Proposed Paper: Integrating Natural Resource Management in California with Resource Conservation Investments

Ken Zimmerman reviewed the April conference call stating that a final draft of the paper had been produced. He then opened the paper to minor edits which were completed and accepted by RMAC.

Discussion then turned to the letter of introduction that will accompany the paper. Mike Connor asked for input from Tracy Schohr as to the adequacy of the letter. She recommended that there be an end goal or a vision of where this effort is targeted. She also recommended follow-up phone calls with the people that receive the paper asking if there are any questions/concerns. She recommended that the Yolo Audubon in particular receive a copy for comment.

Clancy Dutra made a motion to accept changes made as a result of discussion. These changes included instruction to the reviewer on how to respond and to whom. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

RMAC agreed that Ken Zimmerman will present the paper and the cover letter to the Board's Policy Committee at the June 2007 meeting.

Ken Zimmerman directed RMAC discussion to item 5.

Item 5, E. coli Occurrences and Water Quality Implications to the Range and Livestock Industry. Discussion continued from the March 2007 RMAC meeting. Representatives from the California Cattlemen's Association and the California Farm Bureau Federation invited.

Tracy Schohr and Justin Oldfield with the Cattlemen's Association reported on recent outbreaks of E. coli. More research is ongoing with E. coli and cattle as a potential source. In regards to the Salinas outbreak it is known that birds, feral pigs and dogs are carriers. Cattle are primary carriers in the wet season which does not explain the outbreak the recent outbreak that occurred in the dry season.

Workshops have been held in the Salinas Valley to provide information to ranchers. This included research that Atwell and Tate are doing in the state. More research funding is becoming available to determine the cause and environmental conditions that promote outbreaks.

Justin Oldfield noted that the cause and source of the Salinas outbreaks can not be determined at this point. There is a Leafy Green Marketing Agreement that is intended to prevent legislation that regulates growers. It includes buffer strips on crops, better washing of the product, and water sampling.

Leonard Hale asked if spinach is the only problem crop. Tracy Schohr confirmed that other leafy crops are involved in previous outbreaks.

Clancy Dutra asked if the previous RMAC testimony by Robert Mandrell before RMAC indicating that E. coli outbreaks are likely the result of warm weather associated with high rainfall had in any way been substantiated? Justin Oldfield and Tracy Schohr

responded stating that this is the subject of current research, some of which has already established that up to 90% of the pathogen can be trapped by buffer strips during normal years. However, the warm weather with high rainfall hypothesis has not been confirmed with absolute certainty.

Jeff Stephens asked if the Department of Health report on the outbreak had been released and whether it revealed any new information on the cause of the outbreak. Justin Oldfield indicated that the report was issued in March but it did not reveal any new information as to cause.

Ken Zimmerman asked Tracy Schohr to move the discussion directly into the Cattlemen's Association report.

Item 6, Discussion: Problems Associated with Invasive Weed Control Common to other States. Opportunities to Interface with CDFA and the Forest Pest Council

Ken Zimmerman reported on his experience at the Florida summit of the Invasive Species Advisory Committee attended by federal and state agencies. He stated that Florida has accomplished 1 million acres of control on invasive species. They have also mounted an effective public relations program. The program is funded by Florida at \$100 million per year through gas tax on recreational boating and a transfer tax on property. There is also a land acquisition aspect to the program so that buffer strips may be installed around control areas.

The states and the federal agencies are cooperating by way of a MOU (memorandum of understanding). The original strategy was to turn down minor amounts of funding by the state legislature and use the vast amounts of funding from private, federal, and NGOs (non-government organizations) of approximately \$650 million to leverage higher state contributions.

Ken Zimmerman offered the Florida experience as an opportunity to take a new approach to weed management.

Mel Thompson asked if public comment/concern was assessed to generate support for the program. Ken Zimmerman mentioned an educational publication that was targeted for the public and legislators.

Ken Zimmerman asked Steve Schoenig if the Ag commissioners have ever been approached on in-kind funding for weed control. Steve Schoenig responded that cost and loss studies have been made and indications are that the losses are in the billions to California Agriculture. He further stated that the energy and funding being put into invasive weed control is far short of what it needs to be.

Ken Zimmerman noted that Martial Myers (president of the Pet Owners Association) is promoting an Invasive Species Council. He also noted that Florida is spending all of its research funding on pertinent research projects dealing with control. Steve Schoenig stated that previously there was \$5 million spent on invasive species with RMAC review.

Ken Zimmerman asked if Steve Schoenig to consider examining the Florida model as a means of streamlining the funding process for the control of invasive weeds. Steve Schoenig responded stating that Larry Bezark with CDFA would be an excellent contact

to invite to a RMAC meeting to address the issue. He also recommended a representative from the Resources Agency. He further stated that part of the problem of insufficient funding for weed control is that invasive weeds have always been considered to be a secondary problem as compared to insects by agriculture. This has hurt funding for weed control.

Steve Schoenig agreed to contact Larry Bezark and report back to Ken Zimmerman as to availability. Ken Zimmerman agreed to send the power point presentations from the Florida meeting to Steve Schoenig.

Ken Zimmerman asked that CCA keep RMAC informed of developments with the State Water Board regarding waivers for rangelands and non-point source pollution. She responded stating that CCA met with the State Board and concluded there has been no movement towards rangeland waivers. Lahontan is doing testing in the Bridgeport area. San Francisco is handling the issue with the TMDL process. The Central Valley is discussing a Waiver for irrigated pasture.

Ken Zimmerman closed discussion on item 6 and moved to agenda item 4.

Item 7, Agency and Association Reports:

California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA); Steve Schoenig Reporting:

Steve Schoenig reported that all WMA contracts are out and 90% of them have begun work. SB 311 authored by Cogdale will add \$1 million back into the program lined out last year. Hopefully there will be \$2.5 million in total.

CDFA met with a committee of Ag Commissioners which resulted in a change in the way projects are funded. The Committee decided that all WMAs that have quality projects should get some funding as opposed to funding a limited number of the top rated projects. Mike Connor inquired if the funding is permanent. Steve Schoenig confirmed that it is not a one time allocation; however, it is subject to budget changes.

Following the briefing by Steve Schoenig Ken Zimmerman moved discussion to item 6.

California Cattlemen's Association (CCA); Tracy Schohr Reporting:

Tracy Schohr announced that Justin Oldfield is the newest staff member and introduced him to RMAC.

CCA is following AB 1074 that is sponsored by the California Rangeland Coalition (CRC). It would create a conservation permit for resource restoration and enhancement. This would entail going through a separate expedited permitting process. It goes to Appropriations today. These projects would typically be funded by Audubon, Ducks Unlimited, etc., and would benefit by a more expedited process for permits and also help insure that more funding is placed on the ground versus tied up in the permitting process.

The CRC website will be up in two weeks. The CRC took a coalition back to Washington DC recently that was followed by a group from the CCA. Issues discussed

included the taxes due upon the death of an individual, donated conservation easements and other.

Justin Oldfield reported that the E. coli issue is one of his primary areas with CCA as well as the Super Fund legislation that will define using manure spread as fertilizer as a beneficial use as opposed to a hazardous material.

Clancy Dutra asked for clarification on a previous comment concerning the Williamson Act being under review or an issue of importance with the Governor's Office. Tracy Schohr explained that in previous budgets Williamson Act funding has been identified for cuts and that members of the CRC are working with the Governor's Office to prevent any future jeopardy to funding. She referred RMAC to the last issue of "Hot Irons" for complete details on CCA activity.

Ken Zimmerman asked Tracy Schohr to supply a copy of the Wildlife Action Plan. She recommended getting a copy of the Executive Summary rather than the complete copy and stated she would supply a copy of the document.

USFS: Crispin Holland:

Jeff Stephens indicated that Mr. Holland was not able to attend; however, he did send a copy of the annual range monitoring report for distribution to RMAC. Note that Mr. Holland has taken a different position with the USFS and no longer represents Region 5 in total on rangeland issues.

In closing Ken Zimmerman asked that Jeff Stephens make inquiries with the Resources Agency and BLM to determine who the contact for these agencies would be and to solicit participation with RMAC. Jeff Stephens agreed to make the contacts.

Item 8. New and Unfinished Business:

Ken Zimmerman indicated that he has both hard copy and CDs of the publication "Targeting Grazing" and offered it to RMAC members.

Jeff Stephens stated that he neglected to place Focus Group Reports on the agenda and asked the Chairman to address this item under New and Unfinished business. Ken Zimmerman called upon Mike Connor to report on the Rangeland Focus Group.

Mike Connor stated that the Rangeland Focus Group met the previous day and discussed continuing education for Certified Rangeland Managers (CRM). He reported that SRM is in favor of formalizing the CE process. He reported that SRM would prefer to use the national system for reporting CE. However, an electronic version is not yet available. Mike Connor will contact Leonard Jolly with SRM to determine availability of the electronic version.

The National SRM requires 32 Units of CE for registration as a Certified Range Manger. Mike Connor proposes to use the same process.

Mike Connor stated that the Focus Group also discussed how it may be determined where the specialty certification of a CRM would be required. He stated that the current Policy # 11 falls short of clarifying the issue.

Eric Huff joined the discussion and distributed a draft policy statement offering guidance as to when a CRM should be utilized. This would be a proposed Policy # 12 specific to CRMs. This document does not use the 10% canopy threshold; rather it relies on the vegetation type.

Eric Huff agreed to combine the input from RMAC comment and generate a new Board policy for CRMs. The Policy will be circulated by email to RMAC. The Board policy will be agendaized for the August PFEC meeting. Mike Connor stated that he prefers to circulate the policy to the CRM Certification Panel prior to the PFEC.

Ken Zimmerman expressed concern regarding the lack of RMAC interaction with the PFEC and in particular the formulation of policy and test questions for CRMs. Eric Huff reinforced his preference that RMAC members attend PFEC meetings and provide guidance regarding rangeland issues.

Item 9, Public Comment:

NONE

Adjourn